

Claim 1 (Currently amended) A computer implemented method for selecting rules from a rules repository to validate information submitted on an electronic form comprising the steps of:

- a) creating a validation rules repository on a computer;
- b) in response to receiving a connection request, establishing a connection with the created rules repository; ~~and~~
- c) receiving a rule request;
- d) receiving a validation rule description;
- d) searching the rules repository for rules matching the rule description;
- e) determining whether there are any rules that match the validation rule description;
- f) sending a query to the user to create a new rule when no rule matches the validation rule description and storing the created rule in the rules repository; and
- ~~g) in response to receiving a rule request,~~ retrieving the selected rule from the rules repository for incorporation into the electronic form.

Claim 2 (Currently amended) The method as described in claim 1 further comprising before said retrieving step (g) ~~(e)~~, the step of displaying at least one rule from the rules repository in response to a rule request.

Claim 3 (Original) The method as described in claim 2 wherein said step (a) further comprises establishing a plurality of categories of rules and storing the rules in the plurality of categories according to rule type.

Claim 4 (Original) The method as described in claim 3 wherein rule categories comprise alphabet and number categories.

Claim 5 (Original) The method as described in claim 3 wherein rule types comprise name, zip code, telephone number, city, state and address, and credit card number.

Claim 6 (Original) The method as described in claim 3 wherein said displaying step further comprises displaying a category of validation rules.

Claim 7 (Original) The method as described in claim 6 further comprising before said displaying step, the step of receiving the rule request containing an identification of a specific validation rules category.

Claim 8 (Original) The method as described in claim 7 wherein said displaying step further comprises displaying only rules from the identified validation rules category.

Claim 9 (Original) The method as described in claim 8 wherein said rule retrieval step further comprises receiving an identification of a rule in the specific validation rules category and retrieving the identified rule from the rules repository.

Claim 10 (Currently amended) The method as described in claim 1 wherein said step (g) (e) further comprises the steps of: receiving a description of a desired rule; ~~searching the repository for rules matching the rule description~~; displaying all rules matching the rule description; and retrieving a rule selected from the displayed rules matching the rule description.

Claim 11 (Canceled)

Claim 12 (Currently amended) The method as described in claim ~~1~~ 11 further comprising the step of storing the newly created rule in the rule repository.

Claim 13 (Currently amended) The method as described in claim 1 further comprising after said step (g) (e), the step of incorporating the retrieved rule into the electronic form.

Claim 14 (Original) The method as described in claim 13 wherein said incorporating step further comprises: identifying a field in the electronic form; attaching the selected rule to the identified form field; and retrieving validation software for the attached rule.

Claim 15 (Currently amended) A computer implemented method for creating a repository for rules to validate information submitted on an electronic form comprising the steps of:

(a) creating electronic form validation rules;

(b) ~~(a)~~ creating a record for each identified validation rule, the record containing a plurality of fields with information about the rule and a link to software that performs the validation of that rule on information in an electronic form that incorporates that rule;

(c) creating a set of sub-directories in the rule repository, each sub directory would contain at least two categories of validation rules and a plurality of validation rule types under each rule category;

(d) ~~(b)~~ storing the record for an identified validation rule and the corresponding software for that validation rule in the rule repository; and

(e) ~~(c)~~ repeating the above steps for each newly created rule.

Claim 16 (canceled)

Claim 17 (canceled)

Claim 18 (canceled)

Claim 19 (Currently amended) A system for selecting rules to validate information submitted on an electronic form comprising:

(a) a repository for storing electronic form validation rules, each validation rule stored in the repository comprises a record containing a description of the requirement that rule enforces and a pointer to the location in repository of software that executes the validation of that rule on an electronic form, said repository further having a set validation rule sub-directories in which the rules are stored, said directories being based on categories of validation rules;

(b) a computing device connected to said validation rules repository, said computing device capable of interfacing with said repository for the purpose of retrieving form validation rules for incorporation into electronic forms; and

(c) a computer network ~~an~~ interface connected to said computing device and said validation rules repository for facilitating communication between said repository and said computing device.

Claim 20 (Canceled)

Claim 21 (Canceled)

Claim 22 (Canceled)

Claim 23 (Currently amended) A computer program product in a computer readable storage medium for selecting rules from a rules repository to validate information submitted on an electronic form comprising the steps of:

- a) instructions for creating a validation rules repository on a computer;
- b) in response to receiving a connection request, instructions for establishing a connection with the created rules repository; ~~and~~
- c) instructions for receiving a rule request;
- d) instructions for receiving a validation rule description;
- d) instructions for searching the rules repository for rules matching the rule description;
- e) instructions for determining whether there are any rules that match the validation rule description;
- f) instructions for sending a query to the user to create a new rule when no rule matches the validation rule description and storing the created rule in the rules repository;
- and
- ~~g) in response to receiving a rule request,~~ instructions for retrieving the selected rule from the rules repository for incorporation into the electronic form.

Claim 24 (Currently amended) The computer program product as described in claim 23 further comprising before said retrieving instructions ~~(g)~~ ~~(e)~~, instructions for displaying at least one rule from the rules repository in response to a rule request.

Claim 25 (Original) The computer program product as described in claim 24 wherein said instructions (a) further comprise instructions for establishing a plurality of categories of rules and instructions for storing the rules in the plurality of categories according to rule type.

Claim 26 (Original) The computer program product as described in claim 23 wherein said displaying instructions further comprise instructions for displaying a category of validation rules.

Claim 27 (Original) The computer program product as described in claim 26 further comprising before said displaying instructions, instructions for receiving the rule request containing an identification of a specific validation rules category.

Claim 28 (Currently amended) The computer program product as described in claim 23 wherein said retrieving instructions (g) (e) further comprise: instructions for receiving a description of a desired rule, the description containing the rule category; instructions for searching the repository for rules matching the rule description; instructions for displaying all rules matching the rule description; and instructions for retrieving a rule selected from the displayed rules matching the rule description.

Claim 29 (Currently amended) The computer program product as described in claim 23 further comprising before said retrieving instructions (g) (e): instructions for receiving a validation rule descriptor; instructions for searching the rules repository for rules matching the rule description; instructions for determining whether there are any rules that match the validation rule description; instructions sending a query to the user to create a new rule when no rule matches the validation rule descriptor; and instructions retrieving a newly created rule.

Claim 30 (Currently amended) The computer program product as described in claim 23 further comprising after said retrieving instructions (g) (e), instructions for incorporating the retrieved rule into the electronic form.

Claim 31 (Original) The computer program product as described in claim 30 wherein said incorporating instructions further comprise: instructions for identifying a field in the electronic form; instructions for attaching the selected rule to the identified form field; and instructions for retrieving validation software for the attached rule.